

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee

Application ID: 14AC155559

Program Name: SPARK Literacy Program/Environmental Education Initiative

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

Applicant demonstrates a need for reading improvement as evidenced by district's reading achievement scores.

The applicant cited 2012 census statistics in describing its poverty problem in Milwaukee; its relation to minorities, children, and how this relates to the high percentage of free/reduced lunch prices.

The applicant further strengthened its problems/needs in providing statistics and/or references to national statistics and data.

The applicant targets improving literacy for struggling readers (K -3rd), providing environmental education at youth camps, and teaching art skills to underserved students as interventions in reducing Milwaukee's poverty.

The applicant convincingly demonstrates that Members are a highly effective means to the SPARK Early Literacy Program (SPARK) need as evidenced by the level and amount of training received prior to placement. Professional development training Members receive from certified teachers include, The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) program, lesson planning, vocabulary training, reading comprehension training, active learning, after school training and writing.

The applicant not only involves the school and community, but also involves the family in its approach.

The applicant fully explained that due to budget decreases, they are unable to spend time with students; however they are hoping to provide necessary resources that are not otherwise available.

Applicant reported that all targets were achieved for the past three years. Enrollment was maintained at 100% with a retention rate of 95.7%.

Weaknesses:

Applicant identifies poverty as a community need, but does not provide data demonstrating the connection between poverty and reading levels or the severity of reading levels of low income children.

The applicant does not provide data supporting the impact reading has on high school graduation rates in their identified communities.

The applicant does not provide statistical information to convincingly demonstrate the need for environmental and art education.

The applicant states that such programs address those in the greatest need and provide “transformative power of environmental and art knowledge “ yet does not describe the impact to the community and the consequences should the issue go unaddressed.

The applicant discusses a connection between juvenile crime and high school dropouts, but no statistics/data are provided for Milwaukee even though it is stated that the vast majority of youth to be served in this application live in high crime areas.

The applicant does not provide detailed information regarding service activity for all identified areas of need in both the narrative and Logic model.

The applicant does not include the dosage amount for intervention.

Community impact is measured by bringing change, but the applicant did not fully explain how the community will be impacted.

Applicant reported that Member background checks were a finding. The applicant also states that an internal process will be put into place to ensure Member service is in accordance with CNCS policies, but does not identify what those measures are.

The applicant did not provide any other information on past performance besides stating it met its performance measure targets.